

Message Text

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ACTION AF-18

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USIA-15 DRC-01 /095 W

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R 311500Z JUL 74

FM AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3905

INFO AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

AMCONSUL DURBAN

UNCLAS CAPE TOWN 0383

E.O.11652:N/A

TAGS :PINT SF

SUBJ :CRC PROROGUED;OPPOSITION LEADER SEEKS MEETING WITH
PRIME MINISTER

REF :CAPE TOWN 0363

SUMMARY

JULY 24 VOTE OF NO-CONFIDENCE IN GOVERNMENT'S COLORED POLICY
LED TO PROROGATION OF CRC. OPPOSITION PARTIES LED BY LEON HAVE
REQUESTED URGENT MEETING WITH PRIME MINISTER TO DISCUSS SITUATION
AFFECTING COLOREDS. PRIME MINISTER MIGHT TRY TO PUT OFF ANY
SUBSTANTIVE DISCUSSION WITH LEON BUT HE WILL BE UNDER GREAT
PRESSURE IN PARLIAMENT TO FORMULATE MORE WORKABLE COLORED POLICY.

1. ON JULY 30 MINISTER OF COLORED RELATIONS VAN DE MERWE PROROGUED
COLOURED PERSONS REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL (CRC) THUS PUTTING
A PREMATURE END TO WHAT WERE BECOMING INCREASINGLY TUMULTUOUS
MEETINGS FOLLOWING SUCCESSFUL NO-CONFIDENCE VOTE ON JULY 24. DURING
INTERVENING WEEK, OPPOSITION HAD SUCCEEDED IN DEFEATING TWO
FEDERAL PARTY MOTIONS, ONE ON CRC ADDITIONAL PART APPROPRIATION
AND THE OTHER REQUESTING A PROROGING, AND IT WAS BECOMING
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IMPOSSIBLE FOR CRC TO CONDUCT ANY BUSINESS.

2. IN HIS STATEMENT,VAN DER MERWE SAID THAT HE HAD DECIDED TO PROROGUE,UNTIL A DATE TO BE DETERMINED LATER AND USING HIS AUTHORITY UNDER SECTION 15(2)(A) OF THE CRC ACT, BECAUSE A STATEMATE HAD BEEN REACHED. COMMENTING ON AN EARLIER STATEMENT BY LABOR PARTY LEADER SONNY LEON TO THE EFFECT HE WOULD SEEK A MEETING WITH THE PRIME MINISTER TO DISCUSS POSITION OF COLORED PEOPLE, VAN DER MERWE COMMENTED THAT DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND THE CRC HAD ALWAYS BEEN CONDUCTED THROUGH 'RECOGNIZED CHANNELS' (E.G.CRC LIASON COMMITTEE HEADED BY ITS CHIEF EXECUTIVE TOM SWARTZ) AND NOT BY 'GROUPS ,FACTIONS OR PARTIES REPRESENTING ONLY A SECTION OF A POPULATION GROUP'. VAN DER MERWE DID SAY THAT THE DECISION WHETHER OR NOT TO MEET WITH OTHER CRC GROUPD WOULD BE UP TO PRIME MINISTER.

3. SHORTLY AFTER THE PROROGATION, THE OPPOSITION PARTIES,LED BY LABOR PARTY LEADER SONNY LEON,FORMALLY REQUESTED THE PRIME MINISTER TO MEET URGENTLY A 10-MAN DELEGATION FROM THE LABOR, SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC,REPUBLICAN PARTIES AND INDEPENDENTS.

4. AT THE SAME TIME THESE OPPOSITION PARTIES ISSUED A STATEMENT SRITICIZING VAN DER MERWE FOR USING 'SLEDGEHAMMER TACTICS' TO 'SILENCE THE VOICE OF THE PEOPLE' AND TO GIVE CREDIBILITY TO MR.SWARTZ AND HIS FEDERAL PARTY, AND CLAIMING THAT THE PROROGATION WAS'A MOTION OF NO CONFIDENCE BY THE GOVERMNET IN ITS OWN CREATION'.

5. IN A PRESS INTERVIEW ON JULY 31 MR.LEON,WITH REFERENCE TO CAN DER MERWE'S STATEMENT THE DAY BEFORE(PARA THREE), STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE OF PRESENTING THE VIEWS OF HIS FOLLOWERS TO THE LGOVERNMENT WITHOUT INTERFERENCE FROM THE FEDERAL PARTY OR FROM MINISTER VAN DER MERWE.

6. IN COMMENTING ON THE SITUATION,UNITED PARTY CHIEF SPOKESMAN ON COLORED AFFAIRS, MR.W.KINGWILL, M.P. SAID THAT GOVERNMENT MUST NOW RECOGNIZE THAT CRC HAS BROKEN DOWN AND MUST BE REPLACED BY SOMETHING THAT CAN REALIZE THE POLITICAL ASPIRATIONS OF THE COLORED PEOPLE: CONSULTATION MUST REPLACE FORCING THE GOVERNMENT'S VIEWS ON PEOPLE. COLIN EGLIN,LEADER OF THE

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PROGRESSIVE PARTY, SAID THAT RECENT EVENTS SHOWED THAT THE GOVERNMENT'S COLORED POLICY HAD COLLAPSED AND THAT SHARED DECISION MAKING WAS NECESSARY.

7. COMMENT: IT IS UNCERTAIN WHETHER OR WHEN THE PRIME MINISTER WILL RECEIVE LEON AND HIS FOLLOWERS. HE MAY WELL TRY TO AVOID ANY SIGNIFICANT DISCUSSIONS BY REFERRING TO FACT THAT WHOLE MATTER

OF SOUTH AFRICA'S COLOREDS IS NOW BEFORE THERON COMMISSION
(CAPE TOWN A-5, FEBRUARY 9,1973) WHICH SHOULD BE ALLOWED FIRST TO
MAKE
ITS RECOMMENDATIONS. ON OTHER HAND, IT IS CLEAR THAT OPPOSITION
PARTIES WILL ATTACK GOVERNMENT'S HANDLING ATZVNJBIRS#AND
PRESS FOR A MORE WORKABLE POLICY DURING FORTHCOMING
PARLIAMENTARY SESSION.

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